



Cornell University

John S. Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines

Document Title: Is There Any Hope for Pacifism?

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Course: Medieval Studies 101.1

Course Title: Turning the Other Cheek: Pacifism in Medieval Europe

Year: 2006

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winner

## Spring 2006 John S. Knight Assignment Sequence Prize

We are pleased to invite applications for the John S. Knight Assignment Sequence Prize. This prize of \$500 will be awarded to the teacher submitting the best sequence of writing assignments for a First-Year Writing Seminar (honorable mentions, if any, will receive \$150).

Assignment sequences in a writing course are built around a series of essay topics (probably for a portion of the course). Submissions should include a rationale and a description of your plans for eliciting and responding to student drafts and revisions, as well as a description of how you ready students for each essay assignment, for example by engaging them in preparatory writing exercises, including informal writing designed to help students understand the material on which they subsequently write formal essays. Reflections on what worked well, and why, and what you would change another time, are welcome.

The winner will be announced to the Cornell community, and copies of the winning assignment sequence will be made available to all interested staff.

Submissions are due in 101 McGraw Hall by Friday, May 12. No exceptions can be made.

## Spring 2006 John S. Knight Assignment Sequence Prize Application

~Please Print Clearly~

Instructor's name CAITLIN CALLAGHAN

Department MEDVL Course # and title 101.1 TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK:

PACIFISM IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

Should I win a prize, I give the John S. Knight Institute permission to publish, quote from, and/or distribute copies of the assignment sequence, and to distribute publicity to newspapers and other publications, local and/or national, about my winning the prize. I am also prepared to send electronic versions of my text to the Knight Institute (knight\_institute@cornell.edu). I will receive the award for my prize-winning essay upon submission of the electronic text.

IS THERE ANY HOPE FOR PACIFISM?

Title of Assignment Sequence

Instructor's signature

Caitly Callaghan

Date

4-24-06

Caitlin G. Callaghan  
Instructor  
MEDVL 101.1  
Pacifism in Medieval Europe

**Spring 2006 John S. Knight Assignment Sequence Prize Application**

**Title of Assignment Sequence:** "Is there any hope for Pacifism?"

**Assignment Sequence Components:**

- 1) Essay Four: Augustine's Peace and Medieval Pacifism
- 2) Anabaptists and Mennonites in Medieval/Early Modern Europe Handout
- 3) Writing a modern *Summa* in-class writing exercise
- 4) Essay Five: Aquinas and Erasmus: Arguing War and Peace
- 5) Essay Six: Is there any hope for Pacifism?: Pacifists as a Nuisance, a Threat, and a Waste

**Rationale:**

This assignment sequence commenced in the first week of March 2006, when I had the students write freely for ten minutes on the question, "What comes to mind when you hear the word 'pacifism'?" I had asked them to do the same on the first day of class in January, and the weeks between this assignment and that initial one were filled with readings on Augustine, Froissart, and the early Church. Each Monday before Tuesday's class, they had a Blackboard posting due on a two questions or ideas that I posed on the readings, a form of homework that initially seemed purely time-consuming, but on the mid-semester evaluations was consistently ranked as the best way to initiate thinking on some of the more difficult texts. By the time March rolled around, their preliminary thoughts on Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi, and the Vietnam War when the term "pacifism" was raised had been largely replaced with those on the just war theory and literal interpretations of the "Sermon on the Mount".

Although a more comprehensive understanding of 'pacifism' had been what I had hoped for by early March, I wanted to structure the remainder of the course around a set of assignments that would allow us to analyze and critique that understanding. What caused pacifist groups to fail in pursuit of their objectives? What criteria would be necessary for them to succeed? Why were so many monarchs, elected officials, and mainstream religious groups threatened by them? In order to push the students' growing understanding and knowledge to this level, I designed the three essays and one in-class writing exercise listed above.

Different types of writing proved to be the most effective way of reaching this goal, and Essay Four was no exception. With this particular assignment, I asked the students to re-examine the Augustine excerpt we had read, and to compare and/or contrast his conclusions on peace with those of various medieval European pacifist groups. I also asked them to develop their own essay question, so to speak, by giving them the set of texts and the type of analysis that they were supposed to examine and undertake. The initial Blackboard posting, listed on the Essay Four assignment sheet, allowed them to post immediately any questions or confusion that they had with the Augustine text, and we addressed those the following day in class. In addition, I developed a set of twelve reading-based questions for the beginning of that class; when the students came in, I gave them each a number, then assigned them a question with the page number on which they might find the answer. I enacted this same exercise with the Aquinas and Erasmus readings for the later essays—this proved to be a positive way for the students as a group to find the salient points in the text, and to also indicate to me what parts of the readings they had found particularly challenging. In general, I have

found that with medieval and early modern texts—when even the modern English translations can be opaque—that this is the most successful way to give the students a point of entry into an otherwise intimidating reading.

Interspersed with the Blackboard postings and in-class discussions, I had the students complete small at-home writing and reading exercises, including finding and listing similarities between Augustine and the Peace of God movement, and writing and posting three possible theses for this Essay, which we then peer-reviewed in class. As a segue-way into Essay Five, I asked them to initiate comparative thinking between Augustine and Aquinas, so that the transition from one theologian's writing to the next remained relatively seamless.

With the Aquinas reading came the in-class *summa* exercise, which culminated in one class-long writing assignment, but was developed over the course of a few weeks as we critiqued and deconstructed the *summa* format and its effect on rhetoric and argument. Part of the preparation for this in-class writing involved quizzing them on the *summa* format—based on the handout that I had provided which broke the form down. The quizzes consisted of giving definitions for the intricate Latin *summa* terminology; I did not grade them down for performing poorly on the quizzes, but instead, even though everyone had to take them, offered them as extra credit points. This concession, though ultimately minor, allowed those students who were less confident in their writing abilities but more confident in their testing abilities, the chance to demonstrate in a different way their mastery of this complicated form. I also gave them a handout that provided an outline on the beliefs, principles, and reasons for success/failure of the Anabaptists and

Mennonites to help them organize their thinking and have their points laid out before them for when they came into class to begin their *summae*.

An unforeseen bonus of the emphasis on the *summa* and its effect on argument, particularly when arguing the efficacy of war and/or peace, was that two students, approached me and asked if they could write their Essay Fives in the *summa* format. I was delighted with this idea, and both students ended up writing their strongest essays of the term. If anything, this success was one more reminder that each person has a writing “form” that particularly suits him or her, and for these two 21<sup>st</sup>-century college students, the medieval *summa* form might be it!

Essay Five, for everyone, proved to be the point at which the focus on medieval rhetorical strategies were used as a lens to critique the substance of historical arguments for peace, and became the staging ground for analyzing these arguments in a modern context. Again, a series of Blackboard postings—which are summarized and reported by two students each Tuesday, and are then used to initiate class discussion—and a thesis along with counter-arguments, were used to agitate critical thinking on this matter before the actual essay writing took place. With regard to the latter assignment—that of the thesis and counter-argument—I had the students peer-review one another’s, and then I took them home and commented on areas that could be expanded, further critiqued, or highlighted. In hindsight, I would have included the option to write counter-arguments as well as arguments. I had found that this class in particular needed to focus on acknowledging an alternate viewpoint while strengthening their own, but as the term progressed they improved tremendously in this area, and a greater focus on actual

supporting arguments would have been more beneficial. As a result, for Essay Six, I allowed them this option.

The other pertinent detail regarding Essay Five, in terms of feedback, is that I had the students meet with me in a conference and then turn in a revision one week later. The way my class is structured, all other revisions are optional—Essay Two is a revision of Essay One regardless—and do not need to be turned in until the end of the semester with their portfolios; they are free to meet with me at any time during the term to discuss these possible revisions. But I wanted them to have a sense of what the revision process consisted of and what my expectations were, so I included this mandatory revision relatively close to when their other ones would be due.

Essay Six represents the culmination of all of our readings and all of our writing assignments this term. It is not a research paper, but instead an analytic rumination on the patterns of persecution, failure, and hope that have dodged Western pacifist groups since the formation of the Catholic Church. In order to prepare them for this assignment, I instructed the students to read William Stafford's Down in My Heart, a memoir of his time as a conscientious objector in World War II America. Aside from offering a more contemporary experience of pacifism, Stafford cites obliquely and conspicuously many of the thinkers that we have studied this term. Again, the students contributed two Blackboard postings on the content of Stafford's text; in the last one, they answered a set of poetic questions that he poses in his book Every War Has Two Losers, including whether or not one would go to war. These questions present an interesting, end-of-the-term opportunity for us to discuss, on a personal level, the modern-day ramifications of the moral and ethical dilemmas with which people have been wrestling for centuries.

On the last day of class, I ask my students again, to free write for ten minutes on the question “What comes to mind when you hear the term ‘pacifism’?” By this point, with months of reading and writing behind them, their answers are difficult to predict, and their assessment of whether or not there is any hope for pacifism is entirely their own. When I return their portfolios to them, I include these three in-class writings—one on the day they first entered class, one halfway through, and one on the day that they finished.



MEDVL 101.1  
Pacifism in Medieval Europe  
Instructor: Caitlin Callaghan

**Essay Four**  
**Augustine's Peace and Medieval Pacifism**

For your fourth essay, which is four pages and will be due on Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, I would like you to examine Augustine's writings on peace in light of the medieval pacifist groups/movements—the Waldenses, the Peace of God movement, the early Czech and Swiss brethren, etc.—about whom we will be reading. This assignment requires you to develop your own questions and arguments. As a result, I am asking you to be particularly vigilant in your reading and analysis, and I hope that the sequence of assignments that I have designed will help you to do so. You may focus on just one or on many of these medieval groups/movements, but a direct analysis of and comparison to Augustine's writings should be included in your essay.

Due on Blackboard by Noon, M 2/27:

A two-paragraph response to the Augustine excerpt is due on Blackboard for class discussion. The first paragraph should state any questions you have about the reading; in the second you should state why you think Augustine's conception of peace does or does not resonate in a medieval context. Use quotes/documentation.

Thursday, 3/2

Due in Class: List **five** similarities and/or differences between Augustine's conception of peace and the objectives of the Peace of God/Truce of God movement. Type up and turn in; provide quotes to support your claims.

Due on Blackboard by Noon, M 3/6:

Post three possible thesis ideas for your essay on Augustine and the medieval pacifists. These three ideas should express not only your argument, but also identify on which groups you will focus, as well as the similarity/incongruity between Augustine's text and their mission(s).

Due on Blackboard by Noon, M 3/13:

A two-paragraph response to Aquinas. In the first paragraph, discuss the similarities between Augustine's and Aquinas's theories on war. In the second, discuss the similarities/differences between Aquinas's theory and the mission(s) of the pacifist group(s) on which you're focusing in your paper. Since your next essay (Essay Five) will focus on Aquinas's views on peace and war, this will initiate your thinking on this topic.

Thursday, 3/16:

Essay 4 is due in class.

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### Anabaptists and Mennonites in Medieval/Early Modern Europe

In order to complete your *summa* assignment, it may help to review the principles of the medieval and early modern Anabaptist and Mennonite groups. The following handout should structure your review, and you may bring the handout on Thursday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, when you write your *summa* in class.

#### German Anabaptists

- 1) Beliefs/Principles
- 2) Reasons they lasted?
- 3) Reasons they failed?

#### Hutterites

- 1) Beliefs/Principles
- 2) Reasons they lasted?
- 3) Reasons they failed?

#### Dutch Mennonites

- 1) Beliefs/Principles
- 2) Reasons they lasted?
- 3) Reasons they failed?

#### German Anabaptists

- 1) Beliefs/Principles
- 2) Reasons they lasted?
- 3) Reasons they failed?

### Writing a modern *Summa*

Because your fifth essay concerns examining the genres used by Aquinas and Erasmus, I am asking you to compose a mini-*summa* of your own in class on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006. The *summa* is a form developed from oral deliberations at medieval universities; in composing his *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas employs a standard rhetorical and intellectual structure. By using this same structure in your mini-*summae*, you should be able to better examine the effects of this genre in your essay. The basic elements of the structure are as follows:

- 1) First, the *summa* is divided into parts. In Aquinas's text, there are three parts, and they are labeled *Prima*, *Secunda*, and *Tertia*. These are then divided into sub-parts; e.g. *Prima Primae* ("the first part of the first part"), etc. For your *summa*, however, you will be making only one argument, so only one part is needed, *Prima*, with no sub-part.
- 2) Second, each part is separated into *quaestiones* ("questions"), each of which contains several *articuli* ("articles"). For your *summa*, you will have one *quaestio*, which is a question, and one *articulus*, which is an argument/thesis to that question.
- 3) Third, each *articulus* has four elements:
  - a) First, a few *obiectiones* (objections) that are essentially supporting evidence for the *articulus*.
  - b) Second, a short statement of an opposing view to that *articulus* that begins with the phrase *sed contra* ("but against/on the other hand"). This statement is often a quote or similar counter-evidence.
  - c) Third, a *responsio* ("reply") that is a nuanced argument that often incorporates both the *articulus* and the *sed contra*. In other words, when we read Aquinas's *Summa*, the *responsio* is often his thesis or argument—an argument made that much more forceful by the presentation of evidence and counter-evidence before it.
  - d) Fourth, specific replies to the *obiectiones*, beginning with the words *ad primum/secundum/tertium argumentum* (these are often abbreviated to *ad 1*, *ad 2*, *ad 3*, etc.) The purpose of these *obiectiones* responses is to not only refute the *obiectiones*, but also to support the *responsio*, or main argument.

Carefully study the *summa* structure provided, and re-read the Aquinas excerpt on "War, Sedition, and Killing" to familiarize yourself with this very important medieval form. If you have any questions, please ask me as soon as possible!

This assignment will be graded on a 100 point scale like an essay, although it will be part of your participation grade (as it is a non-essay writing assignment). In order to receive a grade for your *summa*, you must complete all components of the assignment.

### Newspaper Articles on American Mennonites

Although you will not be writing a research paper in this class, you still need to be familiar with the tools necessary to conduct research for your future work at Cornell. As a result, part of your *summa* assignment involves finding the four newspaper articles listed below, and then choosing ONE to print out, bring to class, and use for your *summa*. The four articles are as follows:

- 1) "A Simple Life without Modern-Day Distractions, Mennonites Feel at Home in Grandview"

Elizabeth Campbell  
Fort Worth Star-Telegram  
December 21, 2003

- 2) "U.S. Postal's Landis looks like Future Star"

Bonnie DeSimone  
Chicago Tribune  
July 12, 2004

- 3) "Quilting for God with Needle-Callused Fingers, Mennonite Women help mend Fractured Lives Overseas"

Bill Tammens  
Kansas City Star  
April 17, 2005

- 4) "Spreading the Word"

Frances Grandy Taylor  
Hartford Courant  
June 19, 2004

In order to find these articles, you must use the Cornell library website, [library.cornell.edu](http://library.cornell.edu), and access the Find Articles/Databases/E-journals tab. Remember to review the materials that Virginia Cole, the research librarian who conducted your library orientation, provided you with last month if you have trouble.

Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup>:

Please bring the following to class:

- 1) the Aquinas reading on "War, Sedition, and Killing"

In-class assignment:

I. Style, Length, and Structure:

- 1) Break into small groups and re-read *Summa Theologiae* IIaIIae 40: "On War", *articulus 1* "Whether it is always a sin to wage war" (pp. 239-242). Read this section out-loud, alternating from person to person as the text goes from *obiectio* to *obiectio* to *sed contra* etc. When you have finished, jot down your group answers to the following questions:
  - a) Which elements of this *articulus* were the most difficult to read out loud? Which were the least difficult?
  - b) How long are the sentences in *obiectio 1*? How long are the sentences in *ad 1*? Each person in the group should count out the exact number of words.
  - c) What are the effects of short sentence length in the *obiectio*, versus long sentence length in the *ad*? As a group, write down two or three reasons why Aquinas may have chosen short versus long sentence lengths in *obiectio* and *ad*.
  - d) Circle all the verbs in *obiectio 1*, and all the verbs in *ad 1*. Which has more verbs? How are the verbs used differently? (Consider active vs. passive, forms of "be"). Write down your answers as a group.
- 2) We will re-group briefly as a class, and go through the questions above, and I will choose one person from each group to state that group's responses.

Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>

You have a Blackboard posting on the Brock readings due on Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, and we will discuss your postings and the readings in class today.

Thursday, March 30<sup>th</sup>:

Please bring the following to class:

- 2) the Aquinas reading on "War, Sedition, and Killing"
- 3) the Brock readings on Mennonites and Anabaptists
- 4) a copy of ONE of the four newspaper articles about Mennonites in America today. Make sure you read this article *before coming to class*, and that you have noted some of the differences between medieval and modern Mennonites and/or Anabaptists. By "note" I mean underline or highlight—you will need access to these details quickly for your in-class writing assignment.

*You must have read all of these texts thoroughly in order to complete this assignment successfully in class.*

## II. Writing a Summa:

- 1) You will now write, in class, a mini-*summa* that discusses the differences between medieval Mennonites/Anabaptists and their modern American counterparts. In order to complete this assignment successfully, you must do the following:
  - a) Title your *summa* and label the *Prima*, *Secunda*, or *Tertia* part.
  - b) Establish a *quaestio*: "Are there differences between medieval European and modern American Mennonites/Anabaptists?"
  - c) Establish an *articulus*: "It seems that there are differences between medieval European and modern American Mennonites/Anabaptists" OR "It seems that there are not differences between medieval European and modern American Mennonites/Anabaptists".
  - d) Establish three or four *obiectiones* that support your *articulus*. These must include evidence from the readings that you have brought to class (Brock, the newspaper/magazine article). For guidance, look at how Aquinas integrates biblical quotes in his *obiectiones*.
  - e) Establish a *sed contra*. This should be a quote from the readings.
  - f) Write your *responsio*. This is your reply to the *quaestio/articulus/obiectiones/sed contra*. It should be a nuanced argument/thesis—note how Aquinas writes his *responsio* to "Whether it is always a sin to wage war" if necessary.
  - g) Write three or four *argumenti* (*ad 1*, *ad 2*, etc.). These must include evidence from the readings, and should edify your *responsio*.

*Turn in your summa and your newspaper/magazine article by the end of class!*

Follow-up assignment due Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>:

Turn in one typed paragraph detailing the ways in which the *summa* form affected your writing. Did you find yourself using longer or shorter sentences as you wrote the different elements? Did you adopt a different voice at different points in the exercise? How did incorporating quotes in this context differ from incorporating them in an analytic essay? Did you feel that your *responsio*—your argument—was strong? Why or why not?

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**Essay Five**  
**Aquinas and Erasmus: Arguing War and Peace**

For your fifth essay, which is five to six pages long and will be due on Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, I would like you to consider the ways in which Aquinas and Erasmus reason the effectiveness of war and of peace. As with your last essay, part of this assignment is for you to develop your own successful essay question and strong argument. The one requirement that I do have is that at some point you discuss the rhetorical effects or advantages of Aquinas structuring his argument as a *summa* and of Erasmus giving “peace” a narrative persona. As a result, I am asking you to pay particular attention to the structure and narrative devices of each text, in addition to the usual close reading required to write a well-crafted analytic essay.

Due on Blackboard by Noon, M 3/27:

Two-paragraph response to Aquinas and the Brock Mennonite/Anabaptist readings. For this response, you should detail the ways in which the Mennonites and Anabaptists reject or embrace the principles regarding war and killing that Aquinas outlines in his Summa. Use quotes to support your findings.

Thursday, 3/30:

Mini-*summa* assignment, which you will write today in class.

Due on Blackboard by Noon, M 4/3:

Two-paragraph response to Erasmus. In your first paragraph, consider the following questions: “What’s the rhetorical advantage of giving ‘peace’ a narrative persona?” In your second paragraph, consider this question: “How might we expect this essay to be different were it written from the perspective of Erasmus, instead of peace?” Use quotes to support your arguments.

Tuesday, 4/4:

Due in Class: Follow-up assignment to the mini-*summa* exercise

Thursday, 4/6:

Due in Class: Your typed-up thesis and three developed counter-arguments for Essay 5.

Thursday, 4/13

Due in Class: Essay 5. You will have one week to revise and meet with me regarding this essay.

Thursday, 4/20

Due in Class: Essay 5 (revised) *Work for Essay 6 will have already begun at this point!*



MEDVL 101.1

Pacifism in Medieval Europe

Instructor: Caitlin Callaghan

### **Essay Six**

#### **Is there any hope for Pacifism?:**

#### **Pacifists as a Nuisance, a Threat, and a Waste**

We have spent the last few months examining the ways in which individuals and groups who have articulated pacifist ideals, or who have worked towards specifically pacifist goals, have faced persecution, excommunication, exile, imprisonment, torture, and death. Some have acknowledged the irreconcilability between absolute peace and the necessary pragmatism of human governance; others have simply lived apart from mainstream society. Regardless of how they have manifested their beliefs and goals, however, each individual and group studied this semester has elicited some type of response—usually negative—that underscores a pattern of Western perceptions of, and behavior towards, people with pacifist ideals and lives. Why does a belief in peace inspire hatred, disgust, anger, and ultimately, persecution? Why do government leaders—monarchs or elected officials—go to such great lengths to minimize a belief in and adherence to peace among their citizens? What is the future of pacifism? Does it even have a future?

Your last essay will be five to six pages long and is due to me *with your portfolio* at noon on Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>. The only requirements for this essay, aside from its length and due date, are as follows:

- 1) Your argument must address, in some way, the questions above.
- 2) You may use any, and as many, of the texts that we have studied this semester, but you *must* include Down in my Heart.
- 3) You must give some sense of the historical patterns, or progression of, treatment towards pacifists, or peace advocates, in Western (i.e. European/American) culture.
- 4) You must establish a very clear definition of what you mean by “pacifism”.